

# Watermelon is Really Good for You. Sweet!

Science/Nutrition High School

## Objective:

Understand the health benefits of watermelon and how some of its vitamins and minerals work within our bodies

## Supplies:

Watermelon  
Computer access

## Lesson:

1. Share the following information with students.

Nutritionists have long appreciated the health benefits watermelon provides. It's naturally low in saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol. Watermelon is the lycopene leader among fresh produce. It's an important part of a healthy diet and can help prevent diseases and even some types of cancer.

Excellent levels of Vitamin A, B6, and C can be found in watermelon. A two-cup serving of watermelon is also a source of potassium.

2. Divide students into five groups and assign each group one of the following subjects to research. (Each group should answer a specific set of questions and then present their findings to the class.)

### • Lycopene

What is it?  
What is a carotenoid?  
What are its health benefits?  
Is it an antioxidant?

### • Vitamin A

Is it fat- or water-soluble?  
What are its health benefits?  
What are the signs of a vitamin A deficiency?  
Is it an antioxidant?

### • Vitamin B6

Is it fat- or water-soluble?  
What are its health benefits?  
What are the signs of a vitamin A deficiency?  
Is it an antioxidant?

### • Vitamin C

Is it fat- or water-soluble?  
What are its health benefits?  
What are the signs of a vitamin  
A deficiency?  
Is it an antioxidant?

### • Potassium

What is it?  
What are its health benefits?  
What are the signs of a potassium  
deficiency?  
Is it an antioxidant?

3. Create a chart of the research subjects as each group presents.

4. Cut the watermelon open and let the Lycopene group use as a visual aid. (Lycopene is the red pigment in watermelon.)

5. Discuss fat vs. water soluble vitamins with class, noting which vitamins in watermelon are fat- or water-soluble:

Fat-soluble vitamins are absorbed into fat before traveling into the body's bloodstream for use in the body. The body uses what it needs and stores the rest, especially the liver, for later use.

Water-soluble vitamins dissolve in water in the body. Our bodies use what they need and the excess is excreted by kidneys on a daily basis. These vitamins must be replaced every day.

6. Discuss the definition of antioxidant, noting which vitamins, etc. discussed are considered antioxidants.

**antioxidant** – a substance that inhibits oxidation, especially one used to counteract the deterioration of stored food products. (Such as vitamin C or E that removes potentially damaging oxidizing agents in a living organism.)

